

Message Text

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43

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 SS-20 NSC-10

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04 RSC-01 USIA-15

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R 291135Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY BANGUI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4498

INFO AMEMBASSY N

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, CD, CT

SUBJECT: CURRENT STATUS CHRISTIAN MISSIONS

REF N'DJAMENA 2221

1. WE HAVE BEEN FOLLOWING WITH CLOSE INTEREST SITUATION IN CHAD REGARDING MISSIONARIES, BOTH FROM POINT OF VIEW OF OBTAINING WHAT ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WE CAN HERE AND IN TERMS OF WHAT IT COULD MEAN FOR CAR.

2. SEVERAL BAPTIST MISSIONARIES STATIONED HERE HAVE TRAVELED RECENTLY TO CHAD TO SALVAGE SOME OF EQUIPMENT LEFT BEHIND BY THOSE EXPELLED AND HAVE MANAGED TO DO SO WITHOUT MUCH DIFFICULTY FROM EITHER CHADIAN OR CAR AUTHORITIES. THEIR OBSERVATIONS ON SITUATION ESSENTIALLY CONFIRM THAT REPORTED REFTTEL AND PREVIOUS. THEY HEARD REPORTS THAT SEVERAL CHADIAN PASTORS HAD BEEN MISTREATED OR IMPRISONED AND SOME POSSIBLY EVEN KILLED FOR THEIR RESISTANCE TO YONDOH RITES. ONLY ONE BAPTIST EXPELLEE (PAULEY FROM BALIMBA) HAS ARRIVED IN CAR SO FAR AND WILL REMAIN HERE TO WORK.

3. EVANGELICAL BRETHREN MISSION HERE REPORTS THAT THEIR

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ONLY MISSIONARY IN CHAD, KLIEVER AT BAIBOKOUM, IS CURRENTLY

ON HOME LEAVE AND WILL NOT RETURN TO CHAD BUT INSTEAD WILL RESIDE IN CAR AND CARRY ON HIS WORK FROM THIS SIDE OF BORDER.

4. WE HAVE ALSO HAD OCCASION TO DISCUSS SITUATION WITH APOSTOLIC DELEGATE TAGLIAFERRI. HE SAYS THAT WHILE CATHOLICS IN CHAD HAVE MANAGED TO ROLL WITH PUNCH SO FAR, WITH ONLY TWO CATHOLIC MISSIONARIES HAVING BEEN MOLESTED DUE TO INITIATION PROBLEM, HE IS NOT SO SANGUINE THEY CAN LIVE WITH IT INDEFINITELY. HE SAYS THAT WHILE CERTAIN ASPECTS OF NEW RITES ARE ACCEPTABLE, OTHERS ARE DEFINITELY NOT. HE MENTIONED AS SERIOUS MATTER, FOR EXAMPLE, REPORTS THAT PRACTICE OF ORDERING INITIATES TO MURDER CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS HAS SOMETIMES BEEN INCLUDED IN RITES. TAGLIAFERRI CONSIDERS THIS PRACTICE AS POSSIBLE FIRST STEP TOWARDS INSTITUTING POLITICALLY MOTIVATED ASSASSINATIONS. HE IS STILL DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT SITUATION AND FORESEES MORE DIFFICULTIES AS CAMPAIGN MOVES INTO NON-SARA TRIBAL AREAS.

5. THERE ARE NO SIGNS SO FAR THAT A SIMILAR MOVEMENT MIGHT BE TRIED HERE IN CAR. ADMITTEDLY SUCH MOVEMENTS CAN BE CONTAGIOUS, AS TAGLIAFERRI HAS POINTED OUT TO US, AND BOKASSA IS NOT IMMUNE TO PRESSURES GENERATED BY AUTHENTICITY CAMPAIGNS OF HIS NEIGHBORS MOBUTU AND TOMBALBAYE. HE AND HIS MINISTERS OCCASIONALLY SPEAK OF NEED FOR GREATER AFRICANIZATION IN THE ECONOMIC REALM. HOWEVER, IN RELIGIOUS FIELD AMERICAN AND OTHER FOREIGN MISSIONARIES CURRENTLY ENJOY EXCELLENT RELATIONS WITH REGIME. NOT ONLY HAS GOCAR RECENTLY DECORATED TWO AMERICAN MISSIONARIES, BUT IN ONE CASE LAST AUGUST WHERE MAVERICK AFRICAN PASTORS ATTEMPTED TAKEOVER OF SOME BAPTIST CONGREGATIONS, GOCAR DECIDED AGAINST THEM AND FOR REGULAR PASTORS ASSOCIATED WITH AMERICAN MISSION.

6. ALTHOUGH WE KNOW TRIBAL INITIATION RITES ARE PRACTICED IN CAR, WE DO NOT KNOW HOW WIDESPREAD THEY ARE. IN ANY EVENT BOKASSA WOULD HAVE MORE POLITICAL DIFFICULTY IMPOSING THOSE OF HIS OWN VERY SMALL TRIBE, IF THEY STILL EXIST, ON BANDA AND BAYA GROUPS WHICH COMPRISE LARGE MAJORITY. ON BALANCE, WE DO NOT BELIEVE SIMILAR CAMPAIGN IS LIKELY HERE

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ALTHOUGH OTHER FORMS OF "AUTHENTICITY" ARE CERTAINLY POSSIBLE. NEVERTHELESS WE WILL KEEP CLOSE EYE ON ANY LOCAL DEVELOPMENTS ALONG THIS LINE.

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Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
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